

Bonn Will Attempt to Ban Right-Wing Paper

Anti-Semitism Charged; Action Would Be
Government's First Against a Publication

BY JOE ALEX MORRIS JR.

Times Staff Writer

BONN—The West German Cabinet decided Wednesday to try to ban a newspaper for the first time in the 20-year history of the Federal Republic.

The newspaper involved is the National Zeitung, a right-wing publication which uses the state of Israel, according to its critics, as a cloak for old-fashioned Jew-baiting. The decision follows several protests by the Israeli government here, a private court case against the paper by Simon Wiesenthal, head of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, and many other complainants.

The paper, which calls itself "the conscience of the nation," is published in Munich by Dr. Gerhard Frey. It is the most popular of all radical publications here, with a circulation of about 130,000, which makes it the second largest weekly newspaper in the country.

'Abuse of Freedom'

The Cabinet told Minister of Interior Ernst Benda to file suit in the Constitutional Court against the paper and any successor which might appear under a different name. The suit will be based on Article 18 of the Constitution, which rules on abuses of the freedom of expression.

The decision to try to get the paper banned was obviously a difficult one to take, not only because this is an election year but also because many Germans and many outsiders remember that it was Adolf Hitler's National Socialists who conducted the last spree of book-burning and newspaper banning here. Frey indignantly denies he is an unrepentant Nazi or anything other than a good German fighting

for what is right and just.

The paper is ideologically close to the far-right National Democratic Party, but Frey and NPD leader Adolf von Thadden have been on the outs for some time. There is some suspicion in right-wing circles that Frey would like to take over the movement, particularly if the government seeks a court ban on the NPD.

Wednesday's action appeared to be something of a substitute for action against the party. A proposal by Benda to seek a Constitutional Court ban on the party was considered by the Cabinet earlier this year but no action was taken.

Lead to Rejection

Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger and other ministers reportedly feared that a weak case could lead to rejection of the bid by the Constitutional Court. Rather than risk this, they decided to drop the proposed action.

The National Zeitung case could prove to be equally difficult. Frey has consistently attacked Israel but is careful to clothe any anti-Semitism.

Thus the headline of the latest issue reads:

"Israel is always right. Herr Minister Benda, I recognize my guilt." The story is signed by Frey.

The two other articles on the front page are written by Jews, one of them the anti-Zionist Moshe Menuhin, a close relative of violinist Yehudi Menuhin.

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government has taken a long and difficult course. The proceedings could last three to four years.

Other publications have been banned here but not for constitutional reasons. These include all publications which fall under common law, such as obscene magazines, but also East German newspapers, whose inflow is carefully registered as political propaganda.